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from his true vocation, but his own idea which he pursued with enthusiasm until it started to go wrong.

In contrast to his first novel, *Der Proceß* and *Das Schloß* are parables of failed Jewish assimilation into mainstream, gentile society. One reason that the heroes of both novels are apparently distracted from their trials or quests by women is that 'marrying out' was thought to be one way for a Jewish man to overcome his non-acceptance by the majority. Another is the slightly skewed erotic attraction between the two on account of their difference, which Kafka was aware of from experience.

It is to be hoped that this book will revive debates about Kafka's literary reactions to events and developments in the world, in other words the relationship between his writing and society and politics. Recently the emphasis has been on metaphysics and the presence of the world in his fiction has been seen as metaphorical. It is high time the pendulum swung back.

SWANSEA UNIVERSITY

JULIAN PREECE

Joseph Roth's March into History: From the Early Novels to 'Radetzkymarsch' and 'Die Kapuzinergruft'. By KATI TONKIN. (Studies in German Literature, Linguistics and Culture) Rochester, NY: Camden House. 2008. \$75; £40. ISBN 978-1-57113-389-2.

In this lucid and convincing study Kati Tonkin challenges a long-accepted orthodoxy in Roth scholarship, according to which his fiction can be divided into two more or less antithetical halves. Basing their arguments on categories first propounded by Hermann Kesten in 1956, critics have contended that the novels up to *Hiob* (1930) reflect the world-view of the generally left-leaning writer who sometimes presented himself (albeit ironically) as 'der rote Joseph'. They have difficulty reconciling the import of these earlier works with the evidence of the celebrated *Radetzkymarsch* (1932) and its rather less successful sequel *Die Kapuzinergruft* (1938), novels which, it is claimed, are the 'manifestations of the idealizing nostalgia of an alcoholic monarchist with a decreasing grasp on reality' (p. 1).

Referring to texts from both periods of his short and hectic career (1923–1938), Tonkin contends that a dualistic appraisal of Roth's œuvre is not valid. Having located the Galician Jew Roth in the context of the post-1918 settlement, she selects three texts as examples of the early novels: *Das Spinnennetz* (1923), *Hotel Savoy* (1924), and *Die Rebellion* (1924), showing that they offer scant evidence of Roth propounding the progressive view of history expected of a socialist writer. Rather, his message is pessimistic, even apocalyptic. Eschewing the opportunity to develop a theory of a 'middle period' encompassing *Die Flucht ohne Ende*, *Zipper und sein Vater*, and *Rechts und Links* (1927–29), and simply bypassing *Hiob* (which is a shame), Tonkin observes that Roth 'realized that it is not possible to make sense of the present without writing about the past, and it is for this reason, not in order to take flight from reality, that he turns to the portrayal of the Habsburg

Empire in *Radetzkmarsch*' (p. 92). Whereas her reading of the early novels largely dispels notions of Roth as a socialist writer, Tonkin's appraisal of *Radetzkmarsch* does not reveal a novelist seeking nostalgic succour in the past. Instead she finds a historical novel in Lukács's sense, one 'that makes possible an understanding of the present through the portrayal of the past, of the different and specific [. . .] forms that contemporary problems took in earlier times' (p. 200). While in the earlier novels the 'socialist' Roth often observes the cyclical nature of history, the later, ostensibly 'conservative' writer is critical of figures such as Carl Joseph in *Radetzkmarsch* who 'fall prey to the desire to rewrite history', failing to recognize 'its inexorable forward movement' (p. 201). In *Die Büste des Kaisers* (1935) the Polish Count Morstin, described as 'einer der edelsten und reinsten Typen des Österreichers schlechthin', acknowledges the forward momentum of history when he literally buries the past by consigning Emperor Franz Joseph's effigy to the grave.

By stressing the essential wholeness of his œuvre, Tonkin does a signal service to Roth scholarship in a book which never outstays its welcome. One small regret is that the author does not discuss *Tarabas: Ein Gast auf dieser Erde* (1934), where Roth's 'march into history' is extended to examine the figure of a modern military despot. This 'late' novel about a tyrant who turns his back on power and dies a God-fearing penitent appears to support the traditional view of Roth as a writer who, when confronted by a cruel present, retreats into a comforting fiction. I would enjoy reading Tonkin's assessment of this gripping and underrated novel, with its spine-chilling depiction of a Polish/Russian pogrom.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

ANDREW BARKER

Das Ideal des schönen Lebens und die Wirklichkeit der Weimarer Republik: Vorstellungen von Staat und Gemeinschaft im George-Kreis. Ed. by ROMAN KÖSTER, WERNER PLUMPE, BERTRAM SCHEFOLD, and KORINNA SCHÖNHÄRL. (Wissenskultur und gesellschaftlicher Wandel, 33) Munich: Akademie-Verlag. 2009. 280 pp. €49.80. ISBN 978-3-05-004577-1.

The title of this edited volume presents two conflict lines that the circle around Stefan George highlighted: between aesthetics (*schön*) and life (*Leben*), and between ideal life and reality. The volume explores how George's friends negotiated these conflicts in their aesthetic, political, and economic philosophies. The various contributions differ drastically in their aims and attitudes.

On the one hand, Bertram Schefold's introduction to George's poetic world, its social context, and its implications, and Wolfgang Vitzthum's biographical study of Berthold Graf Stauffenberg maintain that George's ideas should reinform contemporary scholarship and that Stauffenberg is an example of intellectual honesty and personal courage for our own times of crisis (pp. 229, 234). Vitzthum analyses how Stauffenberg, through serving the Republic whose institutions and principles he criticized, served a larger *Reich* and *Vaterland*. At the crucial moment, the negative pole of Auschwitz and the positive example of George came together to inspire the